

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1 and 4-32 without prejudice or disclaimer and add claims 33-48 as follows.

33. A method of manufacturing a metallic filter for filtering a fluid, the method comprising:
- heat treating a non-woven metallic mat having a plurality of metallic fibers so as to form a plurality of sinter bonds among said plurality of metallic fibers;
 - creating a filter element having said non-woven, metallic mat;
 - pleating said filter element, said pleating causing at least one of said plurality of sinter bonds to be damaged;
 - fixedly forming said filter element into a filter assembly having a desired shape; and
 - repairing said at least one damaged sinter bond by heat treating said filter element after said filter element has been fixedly formed into said filter assembly.
34. The method according to claim 33, wherein said desired shape has an end and further wherein fixedly forming said filter element into said filter assembly having said desired shape includes coupling a weld ring to said end of said desired shape.
35. The method according to claim 33, wherein fixedly forming said filter element into said filter assembly having a desired shape includes welding said filter element along a seam.
36. The method according to claim 33, wherein creating said filter element includes sandwiching said non-woven metallic mat between at least two support screens.
37. The method according to claim 36, wherein said at least one of said support screens is also metallic and wherein heat treating said filter element after said filter element has

been fixedly formed into said filter assembly further forms a plurality of sinter bonds between said non-woven metallic mat and said at least one metallic support screen.

38. The method according to claim 33, wherein the non-woven metallic mat is formed from a material selected from the group consisting essentially of stainless steel titanium, nickel, Carpenter 20 Cb-3, Hastelloy R and Hastelloy X.
39. The method according to claim 33, further including forming said non-woven metallic mat by placing a first layer of metallic fibers on top of a second layer of metallic fibers.
40. The method according to claim 39, wherein said metallic fibers in said first layer are of a different size than said metallic fibers of said second layer.
41. A method of manufacturing a metallic filter for filtering a fluid, the method comprising:
 - heat treating a non-woven metallic mat having a plurality of metallic fibers so as to form a plurality of sinter bonds among said plurality of metallic fibers;
 - creating a filter element having said non-woven, metallic mat and a first metallic support screen;
 - pleating said filter element;
 - fixedly forming said filter element into a filter assembly having a desired shape; and
 - heat treating said filter element after said filter element has been fixedly formed into said filter assembly so as to bond said filter element to said metallic support screen.
42. The method according to claim 41, wherein said desired shape has an end and further wherein fixedly forming said filter element into said filter assembly having said desired shape includes coupling a weld ring to said end of said desired shape.

43. The method according to claim 41, wherein fixedly forming said filter element into said filter assembly having a desired shape includes welding said filter element along a seam.
44. The method according to claim 41, wherein said filter element includes a second metallic support screen and further wherein creating said filter element includes sandwiching said non-woven metallic mat between said first support screen and said second support screen.
45. The method according to claim 41, wherein the non-woven metallic mat is formed from a material selected from the group consisting essentially of stainless steel titanium, nickel, Carpenter 20 Cb-3, Hastelloy R and Hastelloy X.
46. The method according to claim 45, wherein said metallic support screen is formed from a material selected from the group consisting essentially of stainless steel titanium, nickel, Carpenter 20 Cb-3, Hastelloy R and Hastelloy X.
47. The method according to claim 41, further including forming said non-woven metallic mat by placing a first layer of metallic fibers on top of a second layer of metallic fibers.
48. The method according to claim 47, wherein said metallic fibers in said first layer are of a different size than said metallic fibers of said second layer.